

How to talk about cyberbullying with children

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Having regular conversations about cyberbullying with your child can help keep them safer online.

Find tips and starters in this guide to help young children better understand cyberbullying and get help if it happens to them.



Tips for having a conversation

Before the conversation

- Plan what you want to say
- Choose a casual setting
- Be supportive
- Prepare for multiple bite-sized conversations
- Review reporting & blocking features on platforms they use

During the conversation

- Ask open-ended questions
- Avoid making judgemental statements
- Keep the conversation casual, with space for them to lead the chat
- Use real-world examples to help them compare their experience
- Stay calm

After the conversation

- Keep checking in
- Keep an eye on any changes in mood or habits
- Utilise safety settings on the platforms they use
- Teach them how to use reporting and blocking tools
- Decide on next steps, and explain to your child why you are taking these actions

Conversation starters to tackle cyberbullying

Younger children may have a tougher time understanding exactly what cyberbullying is, and might struggle to talk about what they see online. These conversation starters can help them feel comfortable and open to sharing their online experiences.

Conversations to prevent cyberbullying



“What could you do if someone said something unkind in a game or comment section?”

This is an open-ended question that allows children to think about what actions they could take, without fearing getting the answer wrong. Tying the question to something children use makes it more relatable.

“Who could you talk to if you saw something online that made you sad or uncomfortable?”

This question lets children know that they can look for support from others if they see bullying behaviours online. It also gives you a chance to discuss trusted adults they can talk to like you, a teacher or another close adult in their life.

Conversations to prevent cyberbullying (continued)

“What steps could we take to keep your game positive?”

This will help your child consider proactive steps they can take to prevent unwanted contact, such as asking parental permission before accepting friend requests and maintaining privacy online.

“Imagine you and your friends agree to play a game but one friend isn't invited. What could you do?”

Presenting your child with this scenario can help your child think about ways they can stand up for others to prevent bullying.

“If someone is repeatedly sending you unwanted messages, what are some positive ways you could respond?”

This helps your child consider ways they can disengage with someone they dislike in a positive way, without being mean back. Showing your child how to block the person can be an effective way of doing this.

Conversations to deal with cyberbullying

If you discover that your child has experienced cyberbullying, whether they are a victim or a perpetrator, it is important to remain calm. If you are angry or upset, your child may become less willing to share any further information about their experience.

If your child is a target of cyberbullying

“Thank you for telling me. How are you feeling about what happened?” Thanking your child helps them feel supported and makes them more likely to inform you of issues in the future. Asking about their feelings shows you care and can give insight into the situation, allowing you to support them.

“Would you like me to help you block them?” This question can help guide your child towards positive action. Give options on what you could do first, such as blocking and reporting or contacting school. Asking for their thoughts on how you can help lets the child know you are not lecturing or punishing them.

If your child shows bullying behaviours

“What made you feel like you had to do that?” Getting your child to share their point of view can help them reflect on their behaviour. Something like peer pressure might have caused the behaviour, which this conversation starter can explore. Together, you can think of ways to better handle these feelings in future.

“What would you do differently if you felt this way in future?” This question can shift the focus onto learning and improvement, rather than punishment. It will help them avoid repeating their actions.



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